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ABSTRACT

An overview is provided of Hostos Community College's (HCC's) Urban Community College Transfer Opportunities Program. First, the program's student services activities are described, including the development of a system for the identification and consistent follow-up of the liberal arts transfer population; a computerized Degree Requirement Checklist (DRC); and a transfer seminar. Next, the report describes the following academic activities: the completion of course equivalency listings for three targeted four-year colleges; the investigation of the transferability of HCC courses; and the development of a profile of the liberal arts honors student and the broadening of HCC's honors program. The next section explains the administrative support activities conducted as part of the program, including those designed to provide timely and accurate student information; to identify potential transfer students; and create the DRC, an individualized transcript showing courses taken, in progress, and needed. Next, achievements are discussed in terms of the major project objectives: (1) to identify the potential transfer students; (2) to encourage students to complete the credits applicable to their interests and to transfer requirements using coherent course-taking patterns; (3) to improve articulation of curriculum patterns and practices; and (4) to provide an honors program in the liberal arts and sciences for above average students. Final sections look at program changes in terms of the original project proposal, and efforts to institutionalize the program. (AYC)

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# HOSTOS COMMUNITY COLLEGE'S INTEGRATED TRANSFER PROGRAM: REPORT TO THE FORD FOUNDATION

Bette Kerr, Professor
David Gomez, Dean
Aida Ruiz, Professor
Renee Berger, Project Director

HOSTOS COMMUNITY COLLEGE
Bronx, New York

JC 850 274

URBAN COMMUNITY COLLEGE TRANSFER OPPORTUNITIES PROGRAM

The college's project was conceptualized as a way to integrate desired and existing projects in academic, student services and administrative areas into a logical and comprehensive system of progression and support from initial student entry to four-year college transfer, and then to develop and initiate the system. Our objectives were therefore drawn up sequentially and will be so reported on below. Operationally both institutional logic and a desire to clearly channel responsibility led to the creation of three major Activities. Each was under the leadership of a specific Director, with the Project Director coordinating the project as whole, and there was extensive consultation, and exchange and provision of information between them. Unlike the reporting on objectives, the summary account immediately following of achievements to date will follow the Activity format. Thus by using these two approaches we hope that this Narrative Report will indicate in some depth yet with clarity what has been accomplished and the direction in which we are going.

Achievements

I. Student Services Activity (Prof. Bette Kerr)

(a) A system was developed, with requisite instruments, counselor and faculty involvement, and computerized administrative support, for the identification and consistent follow-up of the liberal arts transfer population, whether as initially self-defined or as it emerged during the college's required freshman orientation course. (Obj. 1)

The system was implemented by counselors conducting the required freshman orientation course (SSD-1000) and by the administration of a specially developed

survey.

A volunteer Faculty Liberal Arts Advisement Corps was specifically recruited and trained in advising/counseling techniques for work with transfer liberal arts students.

(b) A computerized degree requirement checklist developed in the Fall (see Administrative Support below) was reviewed, corrected and updated for each student, and piloted by all faculty advisors in the Spring. The checklist provided a description of students' programs and progess and greatly enhanced the advisement process. (Obj. 2)

(c) The curriculum for a course to follow up on the freshman orientation course was developed Fall 1983 and the course was piloted Spring 1984. Called "Futures: Transfer Seminar", the course was designed to clarify the meaning of the liberal arts, to help students discover the broad range of career paths which emanate therefrom, and to encourage students to consider specific and personal career options. A particular section addressed the needs of students in the advanced level of the Intensive English-as-a-Second-Language (ESL) program. (Obj. 2)

Two sections of the course were successfully piloted-although our original timetable had anticipated only one--and received a very positive student response.

II. Academic Activity (Prof. Aida Ruiz)

A. (a) Course Equivalency Listings (referred to in the original application as "articulation checklist") were completed for three targeted four-year colleges within C.U.N.Y. That is, course equivalencies at each of the three senior institutions were ascertained for every Hostos course, with input both from Hostos and from the responding institution. (Obj. 2)

(b) The Faculty Audit Task Force (Liberal Arts department chairpersons) has taken important steps in defining, and grappling with, the questions involved in the transferability of Hostos courses. While closer analysis revealed that many courses are easily articulated, in other areas difficulties arose (often involving "transferable yes, but as elective? as major requirement? as what? "). Significant consultation has been initiated both within the college and with the relevant accepting institutions. (Obj. 3)

(c) The Task Force has developed transfer tracks by area or discipline, using as a basis those courses designated by the Task Force and the senior colleges as transferable either as major elective credits, distribution core requirement, or core course. A plan to increase articulation has been designed. (Obj. 3)

B. The Honors Committee developed a profile of the liberal arts honors student which took into consideration, and successfully encompassed, the heterogeneity of our actual and entering students in terms of their academic backgrounds and preparation, English language proficiency and academic credits.

At the request and under the guidance of the Committee, proposed Honors courses were developed and the syllabi for eight are already available for implementation. Furthermore, the format and some strategies for the future implementation of a - by definition broader and more substantial-Honors Program have been developed. (Obj. 4)

III. Administrative Support Activity (Dean David Gomez)

This activity provided timely and accurate information on students so that faculty, counselors and administrative staff could focus on substantive policy

and educational issues, and develop their transfer support plans and activities in tandem with the smoothly effective mechanics therefor. It very substantially facilitated the project's progress while developing a data base for future institutional research.

A survey instrument was developed, piloted and refined to assist in the identification of potential transfer students. Degree requirement data were appropriately provided to the Faculty Audit Task Force and, similarly, lists of eligible students to the Honors Committee. (Obj. 1,3,4)

The development of a Degree Requirement Checklist (DRC) was the most singular achievement of the activity. The DRC is a computerized transcript which uses an integrated student data base as its information source. It is personalized for each student, lists courses taken to date (with grades and GPA), courses in progress and those that must be taken to meet current degree requirements for graduation; it can be modified as institutional degree requirements are modified. The DRC in addition factors in needed remedial and developmental course work based on entering students' diagnostic test scores. (Obj. 2)

All data have been converted to machine-readable form for computer analysis and are on permanent record. Furthermore, computer coding of all students who participated in the project's activities has been completed (as well as the requisite computer programs) to enable the institution to perform comparative analyses in the future. Finally, a file has been developed which captures information on student perceptions of the institution, current career and educational goals, and changes in goals over time; when merged with the DRC, these data will provide a wealth of significant information with critical counseling and curricular implications.

Objectives

I. The first objective, to identify the potential transfer students from amongst those taking the required freshman orientation course (SSD-1000), was accomplished.

A survey was administered to all sections of SSD-1000 during the last week of November. The survey asked students to state their educational and career goals, to indicate whether they planned to go on to a four-year college, and to name an area of study or a major which they might wish to pursue. Students who were still undecided could so indicate. The survey was deliberately administered when freshmen had already been exposed to a substantial amount of information with regard to degree requirements, academic programs, and career paths, and had been afforded ample time to explore the possibility of changing their stated program or major.

In addition, and throughout the SSD-1000 course, counselors provided opportunities - in class and on an individual basis - for students to question, clarify and explore educational and career possibilities.

II. "The second objective is to encourage and facilitate student embarkation on a relevant and coherent path towards successful completion of freshman and sophomore credits applicable to students' career interests as well as to four-year colleges." This objective was successfully reached.

(a) The Degree Requirement Checklist (DRC), described earlier, was successfully developed. It was used by all faculty advisors during the formal four-week advisement period in Spring 1984 and importantly supported our transfer activities: the DRC provides students and faculty with a list of course work, grades and program requirements in one integrated, easy to read document; it provides a centralized file of consistent and accurate information on degree requirements; it provides a mechanism for capturing information on student educational objectives in relation to their coursework.

(b) A follow-up to SSD-1000, "Futures: Transfer Seminar" was developed to facilitate the transfer process for those interested in pursuing their studies at the baccalaureate level.

The course syllabus was structured as a seven stage model which afforded students many opportunities to explore a variety of educational options. Students would be guided toward a better understanding of the liberal arts and an appreciation of the solid foundation possessed by those who acquire a broad education in the arts and sciences.

The Transfer Seminar was designed so that students would be encouraged to assess their own interests, skills, and strengths and to begin to consider various career options, many of which were previously unknown to them. Out-of-class assignments required students to do research which would help them to develop and understand the relationship between various liberal arts majors and specific careers. A major objective of the program was to foster the development of new skills which would facilitate students' educational progress at the senior college level. In addition to providing specific information about transfer, the seminar was designed to enhance self-confidence and assertiveness. Role-playing and other experiential activities provided practice for students in negotiating acceptance of their academic credits by senior colleges. The curriculum encouraged students to ask questions, to express their desires, and to persist in moving toward their goals.

Two sections of the seminar were developed: one directed at prospective liberal arts majors who had completed, or had not required, any remedial courses; one whose curriculum was specifically enhanced for the Intensive ESL students so that it would afford maximum opportunity for reinforcement and practice of English communications skills. This latter involved, amongst other things,

such activities as visiting senior colleges and speaking with admissions and recruitment personnel.

Both sections were piloted Spring 1984 and proved to be most successful. Despite the fact that the course carried no credit and no grade, was totally voluntary but required a commitment to regular attendance 1-½ hours/week throughout the semester, no less than 84% of the 50 students recruited completed the program. Since the only "inducement" offered to students were the peripheral benefits for completers of special attention during the advisement period and the right to pre-register before other students (thus ensuring the widest selection of classes), the completion statistics were a particular source of satisfaction to us. Even more than the positive reaction expressed by participants and the broader interest generated by word-of-mouth "publicity", the numbers confirmed our belief in the value and desirability of the curriculum developed.

(c) Under the guidance of the Faculty Audit Task Force, Course Equivalency lists were drawn up, showing all Hostos courses and their equivalent at the three senior colleges to which most of our students go. The lists were then officially channelled to the senior colleges, which responded with their equivalencies on a course by course basis. This task included cooperation with the university-wide committee working on articulation.

III. "The third objective is to facilitate students' transition from the community college to CUNY senior colleges by devising strategies to improve articulation of curriculum patterns and practices."

To say that the Faculty Audit Task Force did indeed devise "strategies to improve articulation" would be accurate but would not adequately indicate the true import of the Task Force's efforts.

In order to meet the objective, a process was initiated which in and of itself was of the greatest significance. The process in effect started with the Course Equivalency Listings, the first official, totally comprehensive such documents, produced with input from both Hostos and the senior colleges. On performing an analysis of the results, particularly in the case of any discrepancies, the Task Force found itself embarked on a most serious examination of certain courses or curriculum areas, either internally or in conjunction with the relevant senior college.

While obtaining official confirmation of the considerable number of Hostos liberal arts courses which are transferable, the Task Force also acquired important information on the scope and specific nature of articulation problems. (These, for example, might be caused by differences between the approaches of the senior colleges themselves, by different sequences of courses within the same discipline or - a concern for the future - by curricular changes at a given senior college such as the inauguration of a core curriculum.)

Thus it is the process which not only has provided the basis for the strategies which have been, and are being, developed, but which also must clearly be a continuing and long-term activity.

IV. "The project's fourth objective is to encourage students to continue their education by providing above-average students with the opportunity to participate in an honors program in the liberal arts and sciences."

In order to meet our fourth objective an Honors Committee was appointed, consisting of faculty who had expressed serious interest in such a program and several of whom had already devoted considerable thought to the subject. They were drawn from the departments of Behavioral/Social Sciences, English, Humanities and Natural Sciences.

The Committee executed its work in three parts:

(a) A profile of the Honors student was drawn up according to multiple criteria. These included GPA at Hostos or from a transfer institution, High School average, GED scores (as applicable) and level of achievement on CUNY Assessment Test(s). A list of potential Honors students already at Hostos was obtained from Administrative Support.

(b) Before developing a full-blown Honors "Program" -- which would necessitate a very substantial administrative and fiscal commitment -- the committee set about identifying faculty who were interested in developing syllabi for Honors Courses, i.e., enhancing courses in the existing curriculum. All liberal arts faculty were asked for proposals according to guidelines developed by the committee; fourteen were received; eight syllabi were finally prepared, and two courses have been recommended for implementation 1984-85.

The committee also identified essential institutional support steps which the implementation of Honors courses would require, and through the Office of Grants and Contracts initiated a search for sources of funding to assist Honors students both while at Hostos and in their transfer efforts.

(c) A format for a Liberal Arts Honors Program was drawn up, together with some strategies for implementation. This took into account the relevant official organisms of the college, academic and administrative support requirements, and the potential opportunities for the college of having such a program.

Changes vis-à-vis original proposal

The single biggest change in resource allocation and staff has been in the college's projected contribution of computer time and staff support and Institutional Research support (and the related internal projections of

Project Director time). While these were not quantified in the proposal, we had of course made estimates in accordance with our planned activities. However the eventual overall project research data requirements, with the resultant need to provide data in quantities and formats which were not natural to the institution's normal operations, meant that some four times more support had to be provided than had been projected for activity-specific requirements.

While no change has been made in the program presented in the original proposal there has been, as indicated under Objective III, an important enlarging of the tasks envisaged in the articulation of courses and programs with those of the four-year colleges.

Institutionalization

The project was from the first developed as an integral part of the institutional program, building largely on existing policies and efforts. Faculty and administrative staff involved, have had standing in the project whether activities accrued to them as falling within the purview of their normal responsibilities or as a logical *pro tem* extension of those responsibilities. Thus project activities have had a full institutional *locus* from their inception.

The question of institutionalization for the future is therefore rather one of maintenance and expansion, and the provision of adequate resources for doing so. The Dean of Students is planning for continuation of the activities under her aegis including any requisite fine-tuning and hoped-for expansion. The Dean of Faculty will guide continued transfer/articulation efforts both through her office and through the appropriate official institutional channels. She will similarly be responsible for the implementation of the recommended Honors Courses and for the continued steps towards an Honors Program.

The major components of the computerized administrative support system developed are by their very nature already institutionalized. For example, the student identification instrument is part of the ongoing freshman orientation course, and the DRC is a current part of the academic advisement process. The maintenance of data files has been assigned to the newly-created Office of Institutional Research and Policy Analysis.

In this manner, the progress to date will continue to be fully institutionalized.

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